UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/154
S/1995/264
6 April 1995
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 68 of the preliminary list*
CONCLUSION OF EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL
ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSURE NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON
STATES AGAINST THE USE OR THREAT OF USE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 6 April 1995 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Acting upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to the contents of the declaration on security assurances made on behalf of France by the Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament on 6 April 1995 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this document and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 68 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jean-Bernard MERIMEE

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ANNEX

Statement concerning security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States made by the Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament on 6 April 1995

The issue of security assurances given by the nuclear Powers to the non-nuclear-weapon States is, for my delegation, an important one:

Firstly, because it corresponds to a real expectation on the part of the non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly those which, have renounced atomic weapons by signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

Secondly, because it involves our particular responsibilities as a nuclear Power;

Finally, because it has acquired new meaning since the end of the cold war, with the growing awareness of the threat which the proliferation of nuclear weapons represents for everyone.

It is in order to meet that expectation, to assume its responsibilities and to make its contribution to efforts to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons that France has decided to take the following steps:

Firstly, it reaffirms, and clarifies, the negative security assurances which it gave in 1982, specifically:

France reaffirms that it will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, except in the case of an invasion or any other attack on France, its territory, its armed forces or other troops, or against its allies or a State towards which it has a security commitment, carried out or sustained by such a State in alliance or association with a nuclear-weapon State.

It seems to us natural that it is the signatory countries to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons - that is to say, the overwhelming majority of countries in the world - who should benefit from these assurances, since they have made a formal non-proliferation commitment. Furthermore, in order to respond to the request of a great many countries, France has sought as much as possible to harmonize the content of its negative assurances with those of the other nuclear Powers. We are pleased that this effort has been successful. The content of the declarations concerning the negative security assurances of France, the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are henceforth practically identical.

Secondly, and for the first time, France has decided to give positive security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Its accession to the Treaty made this decision both possible and desirable. Accordingly:

"France considers that any aggression which is accompanied by the use of nuclear weapons would threaten international peace and security. France recognizes that the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are entitled to an assurance that, should they be attacked with nuclear weapons or threatened with such an attack, the international community and, first and foremost, the United Nations Security Council, would react immediately in accordance with the obligations set forth in the Charter.

"Having regard to these considerations, France makes the following declaration:

"France, as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, pledges that, in the event of attack with nuclear weapons or the threat of such attack against a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, France will immediately inform the Security Council and act within the Council to ensure that the latter takes immediate steps to provide, in accordance with the Charter, necessary assistance to any State which is the victim of such an act or threat of aggression.

"France reaffirms in particular the inherent right, recognized in Article 51 of the Charter, of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack, including an attack with use of nuclear weapons, occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security."

In this area also, we are pleased that the content of these positive assurances has been the subject of close consultations with the other nuclear Powers.

Thirdly, France, with the four other nuclear Powers, has decided to submit to the United Nations Security Council a draft resolution which constitutes a first in many respects, and which reflects our intention to meet the expectations of the international community globally, collectively and specifically;

Globally: for the first time, a draft resolution deals with both negative and positive assurances;

Collectively: for the first time, a resolution of the Security Council specifies the measures which the Security Council could take in the event of aggression, in the areas of the settlement of disputes, humanitarian assistance and compensation to the victims.

The draft resolution solemnly reaffirms the need for all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to fully respect their obligations. That is not a petitio principii, but a reminder of a fundamental rule. The draft resolution also emphasizes the desirable nature of universal accession to the Treaty.

The decisions which I have just announced correspond to our intention to consolidate the non-proliferation regime and particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the cornerstone of that regime. It is our hope and firm conviction that the initiatives we have just taken will contribute thereto.